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ABSTRACT

This packet for vocational educators contains information and materials on writing a letter to a state legislator. A step-by-step procedure is outlined and informative materials that expand upon the various steps are then provided. These materials include a sample Mailgram, a flowchart on how an idea becomes a state law, common sense rules for letter writing. samples of opening paragraphs, samples of closing paragraphs, sources of information on pending legislation, lists of members of the Education Committees of the Florida House of Representatives and Senate, a sample letter that was developed by following the steps outlined in the packet, and a guided letter form. (YLB)

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VOCATIONAL POWER LETTERS

STEP - BY - STEP PROCEDURES IN WRITING A LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR

Dolores Palladino
PRESIDENT

SARASOTA COUNTY VOCATIONAL ADULT ASSOCIATION

CE054078

STEPS IN WRITING A LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR

STEP #1 Study the flow chart (page 1) that shows "How An Idea Becomes A Law."

STEP #2 Read "Letters to Your Legislators" and the "Common Sense Rules" (page 2).

STEP #3 Briefly read through the samples of opening paragraphs (page 3).

STEP #4 Obtain information (facts) about the bill or issue that concerns you. Read (page 4) for suggestions.

STEP #5 Briefly read through the samples of closing paragraphs (page 5).

STEP #6 Read the SAMPLE LETTER that was developed by following the first five steps (page 6).

STEP #7 Use the GUIDED LETTER FORMS to write your letters.

NOTE: A sample of a Mailgram is also included in this packet.

MAILGRAM SERVICE CENTER
MIDDLETOWN, VA. 22645
26PM

800-257-2241

Western Union Mailgram

4-0649508086002 03/26/84 ICS IPMMTZZ CSP TPAB
1 8139222234 MGM TDMT SARASOTA FL 03-26 0735P EST

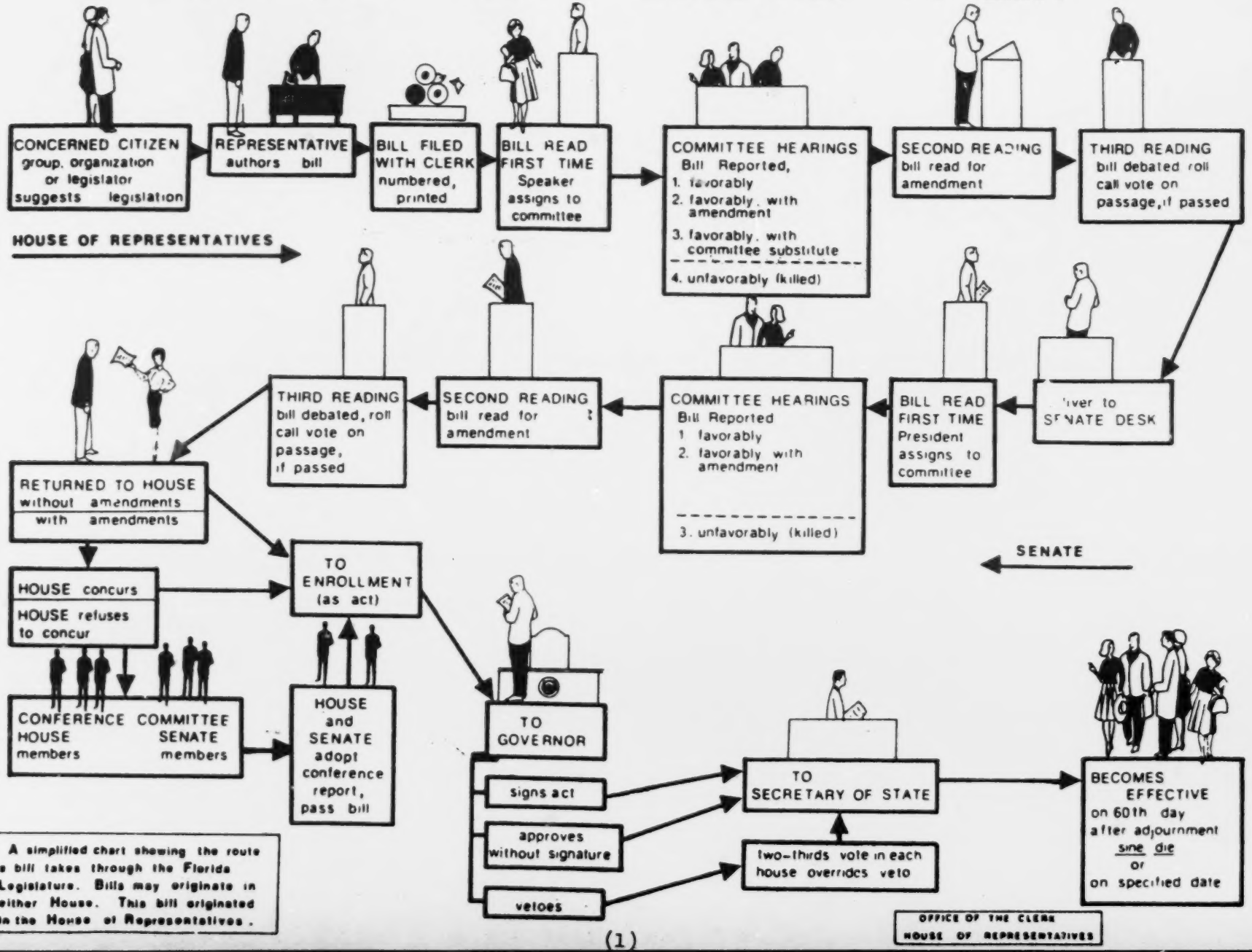
THIS IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

8139222234 MGM TDMT SARASOTA FL 60 03-26 0735P EST
ZIP
SENATOR PAULA HAWKINS
U.S. SENATE
WASHINGTON DC 20510
I'M A VOCATIONAL EDUCATOR. I URGE YOU TO VOTE FOR S.2341, A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT. THIS BILL WILL GET FEDERAL MONEY TO MY SCHOOL EFFICIENTLY. IT WILL HELP ME SERVE MY STUDENTS WHO NEED THE HELP THE MOST
MICHAEL CAVALIER PRESIDENT OF SARASOTA COUNTY VOCATIONAL AND ADULT ASSN

19:35 EST

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

How An Idea Becomes A Law



A simplified chart showing the route a bill takes through the Florida Legislature. Bills may originate in either House. This bill originated in the House of Representatives.

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(1)

L E T T E R S

T O Y O U R

L E G I S L A T O R S

Do you ever feel strongly about a public issue that affects vocational education and wish you had the opportunity to influence others concerning its outcome? Well, you can! Write a letter to your legislator!

Letter-writing is a simple device that is often taken for granted but, actually, it is a democratic right that gives us the chance to express our views to our appointed officials, and our views can possibly affect the course of events that are happening. Letters help legislators measure their constituents' reactions to public issues, and these letters should be a powerful force that helps to determine legislative action. The greater the number of letters expressing the same view, the greater the influential power.

COMMON SENSE RULES

There is no guarantee that your letter will persuade a legislator to support your views but the chances are excellent that it will be effective if you follow some COMMON SENSE RULES.

1. Get to the point fast (first paragraph) and be relevant. Agree or disagree with an issue as strongly as you wish but once you've made your point, stay there. Stick to that point without any clutter of unrelated details.

2. Emphasize facts (middle part of letter). You have a right to your opinion but if your opinion is supported by facts, your letter is more likely to be acknowledged and heeded by legislators.

3. Call for action or support (last paragraph). After you have made your point and supported it with facts, call for some definite action on the part of the legislator.

MAKE YOUR POINT WITH AN OPENING PARAGRAPH

S A M P L E S

I work in the field of vocational education, and I urge you to vote for _____. The passage of this bill will provide the funds necessary to serve those vocational students who need help the most.

As one of your constituents, I wish to inform you of my views concerning _____. I strongly support this legislation because it will benefit vocational education by providing needed funds.

I wish to express my support for the vocational education bill/amendment presently at hand. This bill/amendment is sorely needed as it will provide the funds needed to maintain many vocational programs.

I am writing to inform you of my views in the legislative issues concerning vocational education. Since you are a supporter of vocational education, I know you are interested in your constituents' viewpoints in this area of concern.

I am writing to inform you of my views in the legislative issues concerning vocational education. Although you are not noted as a supporter of vocational education, I believe you are still interested in being aware of your constituents' viewpoints in this area of concern.

This letter is to let you know how I feel about (the present legislation in) OR (the lack of legislative concern for) vocational education. I think that every individual should be aware of legislative issues that deal with vocational education and that you, as a legislator, should lead the pack in being a strong supporter in this area.

I am a vocational teacher/instructor, and I have strong feelings concerning the _____ vocational bill. This letter is to share my views with you.

This letter is in reference to the Bill _____ _____ which affects vocational education. I should like to express my thoughts concerning this bill.

My concern is great for the vocational Bill _____ which is presently being considered in Congress. As a person working in vocational education, I wish to highlight (some of the important parts which will encourage support) OR (some of the parts which will be detrimental to vocational programs).

I understand that the Bill _____ _____ has cut drastically the funding for vocational education, and that legislators are presently working on a compromise bill. Please consider carefully the needs of vocational education when this compromise bill comes up for a vote.

ASK FOR SOME ACTION IN A CLOSING PARAGRAPH

S A M P L E S

You have been a supporter of vocational education in the past, and I sincerely hope you will consider the above when you vote for the supportive bill.

I urge you to keep my comments in mind when you consider any measures relating to vocational issues.

Federal/state support in vocational education is of paramount importance in keeping vital programs in operation. I hope you will do your part in being supportive.

The goal of vocational education is naturally successful job placement, and the needs of the community for workers has increased considerably. We, in vocational education, are striving to meet these needs but if we are going to be hampered by lack of proper funding, then the community will suffer. Hopefully, you will be supportive on a legislative level.

It is the federal/state legislation that sets the tone for vocational education, and you have the power to be influential in this respect. Your support for vocational funding will be greatly appreciated.

Changing technology has had tremendous effects on programs and has made changes in the nature of the work place. These changes in all of the occupational areas cannot be addressed by local school systems without federal help. In your role as a legislator, you can be of great assistance by supporting vocational funding bills.

Quality education and a qualified work force are national/state interests, and the only way to have quality vocational programs is with federal/state money. I urge you to consider these factors when you vote on vocational issues.

Your work on committees for education have always shown a commitment to vocational education. I hope you will continue to be supportive with the issues at hand.

Your commitment to vocational education has been long-standing, and your constant support is appreci: ed. We, in vocational education, feel sure that you will not let the federal/state government abandon its responsibility with present issues in this vital area.

Vocational education is essential to our economic future because the pace of technological change is dependent upon the ability of workers to adapt to everchanging skill needs. The vocational programs that help workers to adapt needs legislative support, and in this respect, you can be most helpful.

OBTAINING INFORMATION ON PENDING LEGISLATION

Each vocational school usually has at least one educator who keeps abreast with current legislative issues and events. This individual can be asked to provide the facts and information needed to write effective letters to legislators. Other means of obtaining information would be to have access to a variety of vocational newsletters, journals, and booklets. These would include:

The local daily newspaper

Florida Vocational Journal

FVA Newsletter

American Vocational Journal

Update - newspaper published by AVA

Journal of the House of Representatives

Interim Calendar. No charge. Write request to:
ALLEN MORRIS, CLERK
House of Representatives
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

MAILING ADDRESSES OF LEGISLATORS

Most vocational schools have access to the Clerk's Manual which is a small book containing the pictures and addresses of all the representatives and senators in Florida. This public document is published in January of each year. It can be purchased for $3.00 from Allen Morris, Clerk of the House, at the above address.

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SARASOTA COUNTY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL CENTER

PHONE (813) 924-1365 4748 BENEVA ROAD SARASOTA, FLORIDA 33583-1798

September 19, 1984

The Honorable Ham A. Fencesitter
House of Representatives
926 House Office Building
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Dear Representative or Senator Fencesitter:

As one of your constituents, I wish to inform you of my views concerning House Bill 1300, which relates to postsecondary education. I strongly support this legislation because it will benefit vocational education by providing much needed funds for the Individualized Manpower Training System.

Of particular interest to me is Section 9 (233.052) because this section addresses the funding of the Individualized Manpower Training System. During the past decade, IMTS Labs, throughout the state of Florida, have helped thousands of students upgrade their basic academic skills to be successful with the study-type assignments required in vocational programs. Since the IMTS Labs have proved to be effective in helping large numbers of students, it is imperative that this special, supportive service continues to be available for vocationally-oriented persons.

State-support in vocational education is of paramount importance in keeping vital programs in operation. I ask for your support of House Bill 1300, and especially Section 9.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Doris Dogood

Doris Dogood
Vocational Instructor
Individualized Manpower Training System

bp

RETURN ADDRESS

STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP _____
DATE _____

_____
_____
_____ (INSIDE ADDRESS)
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_____: SALUTATION

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CLOSING _____

SIGNATURE _____